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activity show such marked diversity of secular trend; what is the meaning of these differences in terms of work and welfare; what causes produce the turning points that appear in most of the trends; why do the turning points of many trends coincide? Here is a set of themes which should fascinate some group of workers adequately furnished with statistical technique, knowledge of economic history, and theoretical insight. Professor Persons' results would set them going and Mr. Edwin Frickey's simple method of computing secular trends (pp. 210, 211) would facilitate their preliminary surveys of new data.

In a still larger sense the *Review* rouses high hopes. It is an experiment in the endowment of economic research. The fact that Professor Persons has been able to go so much farther than any of his predecessors in the statistical study of business cycles is due in part to the fact that he has had a staff of trained assistants to try out his notions and that he has been enabled to devote his own time unreservedly to investigation. Every economist will hope that the early success of the *Review* will be maintained, and that the example set by the Harvard Committee on Economic Research in providing the best of working conditions for keen investigators may be followed by other enlightened groups.

WESLEY C. MITCHELL.

New School for Social Research.

Vital Statistics. An Introduction to the Science of Demography.

By G. C. Whipple. (New York: John Wiley and Sons. 1919. Pp. xii, 517. \$4.)

As the first textbook of vital statistics to be produced in the United States this book is to be accorded a warm welcome. The author is professor of sanitary engineering in Harvard University and his work is dedicated to the students of vital statistics in the School of Public Health of that university and of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In the preface, he modestly confesses that he "is not an authority on vital statistics, much less an authority on demography; he is merely a student of the science."

The only book in English with which this work naturally invites comparison is Dr. Newsholme's *Elements of Vital Statistics*. I believe that this volume will be found as satisfactory a textbook for persons preparing to be health officers under present conditions in the United States as Newsholme's book has long been for persons looking forward to the same career in England. Indeed

the two books are similar, both in their excellencies and in their defects. Both have been prepared with an eye single to the problems likely to arise in the routine work of the public health officer. Both give little attention to the problems of vital statistics in other countries and to the historical development of the subject even in their own country. If Dr. Newsholme's book is somewhat better than the one before us, that is due in no slight measure to the fact that English work in vital statistics even when his book was prepared was probably further advanced and more systematized than American work in the corresponding field today. Yet for American classes I have no doubt that Professor Whipple's book will be found more serviceable than that of Newsholme.

The subtitle of the book is *Introduction to the Science of Demography* and the opening sentence defines that word as "the statistical study of human life." The definition is apparently too broad and its breadth leads to difficulties later. The man who coined the word in 1855 defined it as "the mathematical knowledge of populations, of their general movements and of their physical, civil, mental, and moral condition"; and his grandson, one of the most distinguished of living demographers, has defined it as "the study, mainly statistical, of human groups, in order to learn what are their elements and how they live and renew themselves." These definitions are narrower than that of Professor Whipple and would probably exclude four of the seven principal divisions of demography mentioned by him (p. 2); namely, genealogy, eugenics, biometrics and pathometrics. If, in addition, his two divisions of registration and vital statistics should be combined—and the line of separation between them is at best a shadowy one—we arrive at the better classification of demography into census statistics and vital or registration statistics. This is a natural division and by recognizing and building upon it, as most continental writers do, I believe that future textbooks of vital statistics or future editions of this one will be better organized.

A good textbook is seldom, if ever, produced by a single author or with a single effort. Usually it represents the combined results of many predecessors which are taken up by the last man in the series and fused into a unit. The present book is the first link, not the last in that chain. But the author has cut himself off too sharply from his predecessors, American and foreign. The sources from which he has drawn are largely contemporary American articles. Demography as a whole and vital statistics as a

main division of demography have been carried much further in Europe than in the United States. In view of that fact more attention might with advantage have been given to European predecessors. I believe no publication by a German is cited and in the bibliography only one book in German is mentioned. Yet probably the best statistical journal in recent years is the *Allgemeines Statistisches Archiv*, and few, if any, European writers are more worth attention than its editor, von Mayr. Nor does the author make more than incidental reference to the French authorities in that field, Levasseur and the Bertillons, father and son; and he confuses the French demographer, Jacques Bertillon, with his brother Alphonse (p. 6).

Even in the field of American vital statistics the book might with advantage have imparted a fuller knowledge of what earlier students have done. If the reader knew more than it tells of the lines of progress since 1840 he would be left in a better position for judging the probable direction of future advance and of profitable effort. If one were to ask for the names of half a dozen men who have contributed most to the development of American vital statistics and whose work is now ended, one would be likely to mention Shattuck, Jarvis, Billings, Tracy, Abbott, and Wilbur. Of these only two, I believe, are referred to and that incidentally. By changes of this sort, the book would be improved in those future editions to which I hope and believe it will run.

WALTER F. WILLCOX.

Cornell University.

NEW BOOKS

DUBLIN, L. I. *Mortality statistics of insured wage-earners and their families.* (New York: Metropolitan Life Ins. Co. 1919. Pp. viii, 397.)

JULIN, A. *Précis du cours de statistique général et appliquée.* Fourth edition. (Paris: Rivière. 1919.)

LIESSE, A. *La statistique: ses difficultés, ses procédés, ses résultats.* Third edition. (Paris: Alcan. 1919.)

PAGE, W. *Commerce and industry. Tables of statistics for the British empire from 1815.* (London: Constable. 1919. 24s.)

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